New York Tribune

First to Last—the Truth: News—Editorials—Advertisements

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Our Single War Purpose

President Wilson's message to Congress breathes the country's true purpose in prosecuting the war. However much we may define and redefine our attitude toward diplomatic settlements at the end of the war, our main purpose remains clear-cut and unmistakable. The after-the-war settlements are secondary and subsidiary. They are for the future and will depend not on what we think or say now, but on what the situation is when the war is finished. So long as we accomplish our one definite purpose, which is to overthrow the militaristic autocracy now intrenched in the Central European states, it is of minor consequence to us what particular readjustments of territorial boundaries in Europe, Asia and Africa may come out of a peace congress.

President Wilson restates emphatically our one immediate war aim, and it is the only war aim with which we need to be concerned at present. It is that "this intolerable thing of which the masters of Germany have shown us the ugly face, this menace of combined intrigue and force, which we now see so clearly as the German power, a thing without conscience or honor or capacity for covenanted peace, must be crushed." This means that the German passion for expansion by conquest must be subdued and German ability to indulge in world dominion enterprises in the future must be hobbled.

The President has said more than once that the United States will not consent to make peace with the powers that be in Germany. He has proscribed the Kaiser and the German ruling class as participants in any peace conference. He repeated those phrases in yesterday's message, and by implication he has now extended the ban to the reigning monarch and the ruling classes of Austria-Hungary. He asks Congress to declare war on Austria-Hungary because the Dual Monarchy has become a vassal of Germany and has accepted Prussian ideals of terrorism and military aggression.

In committing the United States to wage war until the present governments of Germany and Austria-Hungary are destroyed and the system on which their power has been erected is shattered, Mr. Wilson has gone further than the head of any other Allied nation has ventured to go. Great Britain, France and Italy are bent on obtaining a military decision over the Central Empires. But none of them has ever issued an ultimatum like the President's, directed against the present rulers of Germany and Austria-Hungary and the Junker aristocracies which support them. Therein Mr. Wilson has read aright the feeling of the American people, who see that political systems like those of the Central Empires, the last survivals of feudalism, with their secret diplomacy, their militaristic arrogance and their lack of any real responsibility to the masses whose future they dispose of, are the real obstacles to the development of common sense relations between nations, of lasting peace and of higher conceptions of international justice and brotherhood.

In the American view no lasting structure of peace can be built on any other basis than the extirpation of the Hohenzollern-Hapsburg régimes. That is the essential feature of President Wilson's war policy. Such a policy means war to a finish in a sense in which our European allies have never yet proclaimed their purpose to make war to a finish. There are conceivable circumstances under which the German and Austrian Kaisers might concede defeat and ask for terms, and under which France, Great Britain and Italy might favor a peace of compromise. But our ultimatum against the two Kaisers and the political orders of which they are the heads would compel us to oppose any settlement short of the complete eradication of the unspeakable and intolerable thing which government as conducted by them has shown itself to be.

If we are to pursue this paramount aim and if we are to persist until we slay the German beast, it is of little consequence what plans of settlement, territorial or other, we hold in abeyance in our minds until the war finishes. It is almost a waste of intellectual effort just now to devise formulas for reaping the fruits of the war and guaranteeing the results of its sacrifices. Let us win it first and then talk about guarantees and permissible or non-permissible projects of reparation and readjustment.

Last January, before we declared war, Mr. Wilson announced a programme of "peace without victory." Since we seek victory now that plan has become inapplicable. But some jarring echoes of it are still to be found in yesterday's message. Purely as a matter of theory and on the part of a non-belligerent it was competent for the United States to approve last January the formula of no indemnities and no annexations. But as a belligerent it is imprudent for us to tie ourselves down to such a formula. We cannot be true to our main purpose of exterminating Hohenzollernism and Hapsburgism and at the same time deprecate interference with the territorial boundaries or "internal affairs" of Germany and Austria-Hungary.

We do interfere in an extreme sense with the "internal affairs" of Germany and Austria-Hungary when we declare that we mean to expel the German and Austro-Hungarian imperial houses and to subvert both the efficient despotism of Germany and the inefficient despotism of Austria-Hungary. The House of Hapsburg is about all that holds the Hapsburg dominions together. Prussia and the Hohenzollerns are the keystone of the German Empire. If we destroy Prussianism, if we dethrone William the Second and the Emperor Charles, we do much more to dismember the Central Empires than if we merely assisted in cutting some slices off their present territorial holdings.

Alsace-Lorraine might be restored to France, and a new kingdom of Poland might be created, embracing Posen and parts, at least, of West Prussia. But such partitions would affect the real Prussia of to-day even less than would a revolution, forced from without, which should destroy Prussian kultur and the whole equilibrium of Prussian life by rooting out Junkerism, imperialism, militarism and all the other cherished Prussian conceptions of government.

The Italian provinces of Austria might go back to Italy and Transylvania and Bukowina might be turned over to Rumania without unsettling the Dual Monarchy half so much as the elimination of the cementing and centralizing influence of the House of Hapsburg would unsettle it.

Let us forget, therefore, all distant formulas for peace settlement which may disturb us in the prosecution of our one definite war purpose. Let us concentrate on the war. President Wilson has wisely responded to the public demand for a declaration of war on Austria-Hungary. We have linked together for elimination the two mediæval governmental machines which plunged the world into war and still stand as the worst obstacles to a just peace among the nations. Soon we shall link with these two offenders the impossible Sultan and the treacherous Ferdinand of Bulgaria.

The downfall of these four royal houses and the destruction of the military resources at their command are a sufficient task for us. We have pledged ourselves to it in the interest of lasting peace and international solidarity. What must be done to force reparation to Belgium, Serbia, Rumania and other states overrun by German armies and to free from Germany's clutch the vassal nations which she has Prussianized may well be left to the future. Mr. Wilson spoke of the reconstruction of Poland in the same breath almost in which he spoke of no territorial annexations at the expense of the Central Powers. That only shows how futile it is to try to lay down any hard and fast rules for guidance in the readjustments which will follow the war. There will be vast territorial reconstructions for Germany's benefit, if Germany wins. Why announce in advance no reconstructions on the Allied side, especially since, as the President says, justice to all is to be the watchword of a peace terms conference?

Let us keep our peace conference powder dry.

To win is the main thing, and it is the outstanding merit of the President's message that it reëmphasizes the unrelenting character of our war on the German government as it is and on the German people in so far as they are represented by it, and further, includes within the scope of our main war purpose the scrapping of Austria-Hungary's equally obstructive and only less predatory autocracy.

What Do They Want?

Once more the news comes from Washington that "while Admiral Benson believes a naval offensive is doomed to failure," some "younger officers" are of another opinion, and that "subtle pressure" is now at work which, it is thought, "will eventually cause Great Britain to depart from her defensive programme." Moreover, it is said that certain "prominent government officials" are conscious of the "growing sentiment" in favor of a naval offensive, and believe it "is having its effect."

Is it not high time to inquire into the origin of this persistent rumor? Who are the "prominent government officials" who feel this "subtle pressure," and what is the plan proposed by the "younger officers" who are bent on "forcing Britain's hand," as we are told, "despite the opposition of Admiral Benson"?

There must be some motive behind all this mischievous talk, some deliberate effort to underrate the work of the Allied navies, for what purpose it is difficult to say. More than a month ago Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge referred to the matter in a letter to "The Daily Telegraph," of London. "A friend of mine," he wrote, "who in the early weeks of the war was sent by our government on a special mission to the United States, where he remained for the best part of two years, wrote to me as far back as the first quarter of 1915 describing the persistent manner in which the British navy was being held up to contempt. It was no use saying that this was due to the mendacities of the enemy's propaganda. People produced British authority for their contemptuous remarks."

We need not, then, regard the current rumors as necessarily of German origin, or conclude that the "subtle pressure" which has lately been brought to bear is intended to help or give comfort to the enemy. But it is reasonable at least to inquire into the purpose of this subtle pressure and to learn, if possible, what the "younger officers" want to do. Finally, who are these "younger officers"?

Our Society for the Suppression of Unnecessary Occupations

It is a small item, but we give it for what it is worth. Perhaps other heartfelt protestants will be moved to stand up and hit other heads, large or small, but equally unnecessary.

With all the urgent need of labor, of hands and heads, male, female, too young, too old, anything so long as they can do something, much, a little, anything, what has been done to suppress those most useless of all human beings, hat-check boys and wash-room boys? So far as our observation goes, not one single jot.

The hat-check boys are perhaps the more celebrated in song and story. But the wash-room boy is quite as irritating an institution and, if possible, a shade more superfluous. What he does of an actually useful nature nobody has ever reported. Perhaps, once or twice a day, in a secret hour, he washes something or other or sweeps up a bit. But through the long, long day, when guests are coming and going, his toil is no more than that of any hungry cat. He rubs against his victims' shins and purrs and blocks you off from the wash-bowl you want and forces a towel on you that you don't want and lies down on the floor to make sure that you cannot altogether overlook him as you go forth.

His hunger is easily satiated with the smallest tipping piece known to New York, a dime. We never heard of one who actually bit and scratched and snarled. But if looks were claws, most New Yorkers would have long since been scarred from head to foot.

As charter members of our club we nominate the wash-room boys. On their heels should tread the hat-check boys. Boys they are called, but that is only our American pretence by which we excuse ourselves for using able-bodied men for such work. The two races are easily of draft age. Let them at least go to work for the duration of the war.

"A Hardy Myth"

(From The Westminster Gazette)

All stories which malicious gossips may have spread about American officers or soldiers "spreading themselves" at the front may be dismissed with contempt. In a recent visit to France I heard nothing but the warmest praise of the Americans, and especially of the modesty and simplicity of their behavior. I was told everywhere that the American staff officers had made the best impression. So far from desiring to teach other people their business or boasting what they were going to do before they had begun, they were quick to realize the newness and difficulty of the war problems under present conditions and modestly anxious to learn everything possible from the experience of British and French.

Peace

(New Zealand—1917)

In field and road and flowered way,
The summer evening fills with gold;
And in the drowsy curving bay
Sea whispers creep into their fold.

Along the calm suburban street
Lie gardens hedged from storm and sin;
There slowly and with soundless feet
Peace leads the nun-like twilight in.

Among his flowers' unyielding foes
The gardener stoops to bloodless war,
Warm beauty plucks the tired rose,
And care-free players call the score.

In benediction falls the night,
Priest of the kindly quiet hours;
The windows' peaceful spears of light
Are couched against the sleeping flowers.

Remote within the unscarr'd gate,
We sip the daily cup of ease,
For 'twixt us and the swords of hate
March legions of the vassal seas.

But distance from the battle cry,
The surface smoothness of our round,
The pageantry of earth and sky,
The anodyne of sight and sound.

Of what avail are these to turn
The thrust of one weak orphaned hand,
Or dull the distant fires that burn
Across the anguish of a land?

A child's cry wounds the sleeping night,
Wan ghosts come thronging in the gloom;
The hosts of peace are put to flight,
And horror fills the guarded room.

Far better that one might, near
To that vast agony, forget,
Amid the flow of hope and fear
And endless coil of duty set

The pain that treach'rous distance wings
For those who only stand and wait,
Denied the balm that action brings—
The fettered audience of Fate!

ALAN E. MULGAN.

Auckland, New Zealand.

A Gagged Minority

The German Press Held Up as an Example of Free Speech

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: In this "land of the free" we are so used to taking our liberty for granted that we are incredulous of the need of vigilance. Does not the Constitution itself prescribe that freedom of speech and of the press shall not be abridged? The free expression of opinion, public criticism of the government, the right of a minority to be heard, the power of the majority to compel the President and the Congress to stand behind them, these are the very presuppositions of democracy. Yet our government is now undertaking not only to coerce individuals into silence, but even to suppress the press of a great political party.

In every one of the warring nations of Europe the governments have been overthrown by the legislatures and by the people. It is only in this democracy that the government claims the power to control the people until the end of the war. In Germany the new Chancellor accepted office only after learning that he would be acceptable to the Reichstag, one-third of whose electors are Socialists. In France a Socialist Premier has just now been displaced because he is no longer trusted by the Socialists, and is succeeded by an aged radical, whose reputation was enhanced by the suppression of his newspaper by an earlier ministry. A strictly Socialist government will soon follow in France, as it will in Italy. The British government has been overthrown and the Cabinet has been continually altered to meet the demands of the people. The present Premier, once a radical agitator, will soon be discarded. In Russia the greatest of the world's peoples have become a Socialist commonwealth.

But here in the United States the official press of the Socialist party is suppressed for maintaining principles nearly dominant in Europe, and likely to become dominant here as well as there. A natural consequence of the suppression of the Socialist newspapers is the acknowledged necessity for a combination of the old-line parties in order to defeat the Socialists in the Congressional elections of next year. But when the capitalistic classes are segregated their ultimate departure is sure.

I am led to write this letter from reflections caused by the contents of papers just received from England. "The Times" reports a Member of Parliament as saying, "The opposition to peace comes chiefly from profiteers and their jackals." "The Manchester Guardian" closes an editorial article with the words: "There are some among our governors who think that every time they trample upon a British liberty they are defeating the enemy." "The Nation" speaks of "the atmosphere of illusion in which the Prime Minister lives," and "The Spectator" of his "frantic egotism."

No one who cares wisely for his country can regard with satisfaction the fact that the press is less enslaved in England and in Germany than in the United States.

J. McKEEN CATTELL.

Garrison-on-Hudson, N. Y., Dec. 3, 1917.

Objections to National Prohibition

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: Elizabeth Tilton's plea in to-day's Tribune that the newly enfranchised women of this state should use their influence on behalf of national prohibition ignores certain vital facts in connection with the scheme for forcing prohibition upon the country by the vote of state Legislatures respecting a minority of the people.

By the enactment of the Webb-Kenyon law, giving the states complete control of the interstate traffic in liquors, Congress has given each state the power to exclude all liquors from its territory. The Reed "bone-dry" law, enacted this year, makes it a felony to ship liquor into prohibition states. These laws enable the states to be as dry as they choose, and even those prohibition states which permitted the importation of liquor for personal use will be made "bone-dry" so far as the shipment of liquor from wet territory is concerned. There is, therefore, not the slightest excuse for further action by Congress.

The real reason why the prohibitionists advocate the Sheppard amendment is the fact that under the system by which the Constitution is changed it is possible to secure the adoption of that amendment by a minority of the voters of the country. In voting on amendments a state with 50,000 voters counts the same as a state with 500,000. Thus, Nevada, which cast about 20,000 votes at the late Presidential election, would count as much as Illinois with 900,000 voters. Arizona, with 23,000 votes, would be equal to New York, with 1,600,000. Thirty-six states have a population of 46,000,000, while the twelve other states have 56,000,000. If the thirty-six state Legislatures should ratify the prohibition amendment it would be adopted, and the 56,000,000 would be subjected, in a matter concerning their personal tastes and habits, to the rule of the 46,000,000.

As stated by Senator Lodge, of Massachusetts, in the debate on the Sheppard amendment, a standing army of 500,000 men could not prevent cider becoming hard, or alcoholic; wine from fermenting; or the illicit production of moonshine whiskey.

STATE CONTROL.

New York, Nov. 27, 1917.

Red Service Stars

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: I think the suggestion of N. S. Seeley in to-day's Tribune to substitute a red star in the service flag for a blue one, to show the death of any one occurring in the line of duty of the service, is the correct solution of this problem.

I was much struck, while in Ottawa, Canada, last summer, at a church service, in seeing displayed a "Roll of Honor" in the nave giving a list of the communicants of that church who were in the service. The names were engrossed in black ink, but opposite those who had died in the line of duty a red star had been placed. This was neat, dignified and very impressive in its simplicity. Possibly the idea might be extended to the service flag, of changing a blue star for a man who is in active service to a small red cross should he become deceased, but on the whole I am inclined to think that the simpler change from a blue star to a red one is the better.

The matter is an interesting one and will soon become one of importance, and I think an exchange of views most desirable. In my own office, that of the Military Training Camps Association, we have a service flag with ten stars, running from majors to privates, and we feel very much interested in the subject.

ARTHUR F. COSBY.

New York, Dec. 1, 1917.

A Challenge

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: In your paper a few days ago a lady proposed for men a "smokeless" day. Now, I should be the first to agree to it if the ladies and their children proposed to themselves a "candyless" day. Take the situation in Rochester. The evening papers yesterday announced the arrival of three loaded cars of sugar for the candy factories, and yet for over a week most if not all of the grocers of Rochester have been without sugar!

OSCAR PARDO.

Rochester, N. Y., Dec. 2, 1917.

The Menace of Peace

A Timely Precedent Cited from the Pleas of Faint-Hearted Pacifists in the '60s

By George Haven Putnam

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: The veterans of the Civil War period may recall to the citizens of this later generation that at various critical times during the war the advocates for an immediate peace were as strenuous, as fierce, as hysterical and as shortsighted as they are to-day.

Then as now the people who were clamoring that "the war was hopeless," that there was no possibility of overcoming the enemies of the Republic, that it was the duty of the President and of the country to accept "peace without victory," were made up of two classes: there were the paid emissaries and the direct representatives of the Confederacy, such as Vallandigham and his Knights of the Golden Circle in the West and Benjamin Wood and his "Daily News" in New York, doing what they could to discourage volunteering, to obstruct the draft, to incite strikes and riots and to block transportation; and following this leadership came the sentimentalists, shrieking from platforms and in widely distributed "appeals to the people" that fighting was wicked, and that the issues should be adjusted not by war but by peace arguments.

These paid emissaries and shortsighted idealists were working together for the cause of the Confederacy; they were alike serving the purpose of the slave holding autocracy. The clamors for a peaceful settlement which began in July, 1861, after the Battle of Bull Run, were renewed with fresh bitterness in June, 1863, after Hooker's defeat at Chancellorsville, and in June, 1864, after Grant's repulse at Cold Harbor.

Lincoln's Firmness

The President, carrying on his shoulders all the weight of the war, was called upon to listen to delegations of long-haired men and short-haired women who crowded to the White House to give to poor overburdened Lincoln "a message from the Lord in behalf of peace."

Lincoln's reply through all the weary four years was in substance the same: "This war was begun with a purpose—the saving of the Republic—and, please God, it shall be continued until that purpose is accomplished."

Lincoln had made clear in many statements that the war could be brought to an assured settlement that would prevent the renewal of war in the near future only through the removal of the cause that worked for war. It was, said Lincoln, the system of slavery and the attempt to make slavery a national instead of a local institution that had created the cleavage between the two sections of the country.

We understand now that if the shriekers for peace had had their way the autocracy of the South would have established their state with slavery as the cornerstone; the Republic would have been broken up into three, or possibly into four, communities. The continent would have been crossed with political boundaries and with tariff barriers and burdened with standing armies. It was better to give the four years to fighting the fight through than to accept for half a century or more a condition of war.

England and France are to-day prepared to recognize that the death of our Republic would have been a misfortune not only for America but for the world.

The Example of Russia

We have to-day in the conditions in Russia an example of the disasters that can be brought about when the direction of national affairs comes into the hands of a group of ignorant and often selfish theorists, working under the suggestion if not directly under the instructions of the enemies of their country.

The fighters in Russia as in America for "peace without victory" are strengthening the hands and serving the cause of the most brutal militarism that the world has ever seen.

Lord Lansdowne's recent demand for consideration by the Allies of terms for peace and for a restatement of their conditions is ill-timed and its only result has been to give satisfaction and hope to Berlin. Lansdowne forgets that an explicit statement of the things for which the Allies are fighting has already been made, and that the conditions have been restated with admirable clearness and force by President Wilson. He forgets that no statement of terms has ever been received from Germany. The status of the war for the maintenance of civilization against the assaults of organized barbarism is at this point very similar to that in June, 1863, of the war for the Republic.

The enemy has been checked, but not overcome. His resources in men and in material are coming nearer to exhaustion, but he is still able on the fighting line to make a show of strength.

The decision rests upon staying power, upon will and nerves.

Civilization cannot endure with the states of the world half slave and half free. The will power and the nerve power of the voters for freedom must show themselves patient enough and strong enough to overcome the militaristic barbarism of the Hun.

GEORGE HAVEN PUTNAM,
Late Major, United States Volunteers.

New York, Dec. 3, 1917.

Britain's Spokesmen

Are We Obliged to Accept the Opinion of Lord Lansdowne?

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: The letter of Lord Lansdowne in "The Daily Telegraph" comes as a blow to us, not only as Americans, but also as admirers of the British people for the tremendous effort they have put forward "to vindicate the principles of peace and justice . . . as against selfish autocratic power"—to use the words of President Wilson's proclamation. To hear the suggestion made that the German government and the German people are as yet ready "to submit future disputes to arbitration," to enter "into an international pact" or "into recognizances to keep the peace," takes us so far beyond all reason as to make it seem that we are listening to some drivel of Lord Haldane and his "spiritual home in Germany" associates.

We seem to be back again in the years immediately preceding 1914, when the idea prevailed in English political circles that fair words and a generous spirit were all that were necessary to bring Germany to reason. And this after all the horrors and the sins against humanity that she has perpetrated during the last three years!

Can we, dare we, hope that these men do not speak for the virility that most of us still believe informs the British body politic? Must we look elsewhere for its assertion—for the words that are back of the splendid and heroic deeds of English valor before the enemy? Perhaps we may find it—happy the day!—in the men of physical strength and of unsophisticated thinking, rather than among the politicians and the high servants of state. For I read that W. Harry Gosling, president of the British Trade Union Congress in 1916 and of the Transport Workers' Federation in 1917, has recently said, not, it is true, in words and phrases as besutifully turned as are those of Lord Lansdowne, but all the more heartening because of their simplicity: "Of the exact terms and conditions on which peace may eventually be concluded I do not speak. But the workingmen of England know that if all our sacrifice is not to be in vain there can only be one end, and that is the complete overthrow of German tyranny. For that we are willing to go on fighting just as long as necessary. It is the essential condition to future world safety." And he continues: "A half victory, an inconclusive peace, a settlement which settled nothing, a patched-up truce under which the nations had breathing time to reëquip themselves for fresh conflict on a still more terrible scale—that would be the crowning disaster."

A disaster it certainly would be. "La Victoire Integrale" must be our programme. Nothing less will carry us through. Autocratic power is still dominant in Germany. Indeed, it has made headway through and by means of the war; and any peace made by compromise will only add to its force. If German military power remains unbroken and has a consolidated "Mitteleuropa" upon which to base its military and economic power and from which to draw its men—all the other schemes of the pan-Germanists are feasible; the Berlin-Bagdad railroad, a Germanized South America and a German India in Africa.

"All ethical considerations are completely alien to the state, and the state must therefore resolutely keep them at arm's length" is the latest form in which Germanic state doctrine has been formulated. In view of this, Lord Lansdowne has done the greatest disservice to the cause of the Allies and to the cause of America by writing his letter—knowing, as he must do, the weight that attaches to his name. And he has besmirched his own land in such manner that its well-wishers can only hope that he may be swiftly and completely repudiated.

RICHARD GOTTHEIL.

New York, Dec. 1, 1917.

"Earnest Appreciation"

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: The carriers and clerks of the Harrison (N. J.) postoffice wish to thank you for your splendid editorial in behalf of the postal employes.

Nothing can do more to help us receive the much needed increase in salary than good, sound editorial comment, such as appeared on December 1.

We hereby express our most earnest appreciation for the efforts you have made to better the conditions of Uncle Sam's deserving workers, the postal employes.

JOSEPH ZUCKERHOOD, Secretary.

Harrison, N. J., Dec. 1, 1917.

Knitting in Public

Quiet Needles as Contrasted With Restless Enthusiasts

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: Concerning the letter headed "Knitters at Concerts," which appeared in this morning's Tribune, I should like to point out one or two angles which, I fear, could not occur to the writer.

This gentleman seems to be between two concerns: one for his own comfort, and the other that the knitters may miss the message from the Almighty which is being transmitted through the artist.

Noise at a concert is obviously discourteous and needs no discussion, but the quiet mechanical movements of knitting can only be distracting to the type of person who cannot concentrate, the type who would like Carnegie Hall and the Philharmonic Orchestra to himself for the afternoon.

I have frequently watched audiences at concerts to note their reaction to different forms of music. Gatherings of men are like the leaves of the trees. There is always a slight undercurrent of motion, an infinitesimal rustling, faint stirrings of a force imperfectly tamed. There are the beating time of the so-called enthusiast, the foot tapping and twitchings of the bored or nervous, the perpetual shifting of position. I dare say when these waste movements become directed and useful, as in knitting, they make a more obvious butt for the pent-up irritation of the nervous person.

Have these women no homes to knit in? naively asks your correspondent. Evidently his imagination does not suggest that they have other things to do at home than knit. I, for instance, do not claim to be a "society woman." I am busy from early in the morning until, often, late in the evening with my household, my baby, welfare work and the fulfilling of many duties of long standing. I have no time to knit at home, but I have made quite a number of garments for the soldiers in the subway, on top of 'buses and in other moments which would otherwise be wasted. Concert knitting comes, in a lesser degree, under this head. Every busy woman requires recreation. The mechanical movements of knitting do not interfere with her hearing the music and she makes double use of her time.

The element of ostentation is too petty to merit discussion. If it does exist, it exists merely in a minority which does not affect the issue, and it exists largely, I suspect, in the point of view of the critical onlooker.

The question of discomfort, to my mind, narrows down to the supersensitive annoyance of the crank as opposed to the real suffering of the soldier in need of warm garments.

As to the Almighty's message, I approach the subject with great diffidence and awe. There are those who claim personal messages and even point out messages to others. Personally, I should have a hesitancy to do either, but that may be a matter of temperament, and to the contrary you have the weight of many illustrious persons.

New York, Dec. 3, 1917. E. H. D.

Check Knitting at the Door

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: Having read with interest the excellent letter of Mr. Malkan in your issue of to-day, I write to ask if it would be possible for managers of concert halls to place placards in the lobby requesting that knitting outfits be checked before entering the hall?

If this is impossible, could not the ushers be instructed to stop the knitting while the music is going on? These hysterical women who flourish their arms and hands and disturb every one by the clicking of the needles should be made to understand that true patriotism consists in self-sacrifice, not in seeking notoriety. Far be it from me to hinder the knitting—only let it be kept where it belongs, in the private home or place where it will not annoy others.

The women of the Revolution did not flaunt in public, nor did they have their pictures in the Sunday papers; they unselfishly did their part in silence and privacy. Cannot the women of to-day follow their example? Or must they continue to make exhibitions of themselves, since they cannot shine in any other way?

ANGELINA COMFORT.

New York, Dec. 3, 1917.

The Negro in Chile

History Is Offered in Reply to Mrs. De Saulles

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: Mrs. De Saulles, who has been recently acquitted of the charge of murder, when being examined a few days ago and asked if she had attended the Carman trial and what she had observed there, replied that she had and had heard "a black thing testify." Asked what she meant by "black thing," she replied: "A nigger." Asked if that was the way the people of her country referred to colored people, she replied: "We don't have them in my country."

For the information of Mrs. De Saulles, who is probably not very familiar with the history of her country, owing to her long residence outside of it, it may interest her to know that Vasco Nunez Balboa carried negroes from Panama into Chile as early as 1515, and that the Austin Friars had a convent at Santiago, where they took care of Spaniards and their black and Indian servants who peopled all the banks of this river and are numerous, living on separate farms all along the country. That the blacks of that period mingled their blood, or had it mingled for them by the people among whom they lived, is attested by the fact that there was a brotherhood of mulattoes who came from St. Austin, at St. Jago (vide Pinkerton's "Voyages and Travels," Vol. 14; Alonzo de Orvalle's "Historical Relations of the Kingdom of Chile, of St. Jago of Chile, and Procurator at Rome for That Place, 1648"; printed at Rome by Francisco Cavallo).

In the "Journal of Researches," by Charles Darwin, at page 92, he says: " . . . This posta was commanded by a negro lieutenant born in Africa; to his credit be it said there was not a rancho between the Colorado and Buenos Ayres in nearly such neat order as his. He had a little room for strangers and a small corral for the horses, all made of sticks and reeds; he had also dug a ditch 'round his house, as a defence in case of being attacked. This would, however, have been of little avail if the Indians had come; but his chief comfort seemed to rest in the thought of selling his life dearly. A short time before a body of Indians had travelled past in the night; if they had been aware of the posta, our own black friend and his four soldiers would assuredly have been slaughtered. I did not anywhere meet a more civil and obliging man than this negro; it was therefore the more painful to see that he would not sit down and eat with us."

And at page 356, this: "In this part of Chile there are two passes across the Andes to Mendoza; the one most commonly used—namely, that of Anconcaqua, or Uspallata—is situated some way to the north; the other, called the Portillo, is to the south and nearer, but more lofty and dangerous. . . . The custom officers were very civil, which was perhaps partly owing to the passport which the President of the republic had given me, but I must express my admiration at the natural politeness of almost every Chileno. In this instance the contrast with the same class of men in most other countries was strongly marked. I may mention an anecdote with which I was at the time much pleased. We met near Mendoza a little and very fat negress, riding astride on a mule. She had a goitre so enormous that it was scarcely possible to avoid gazing at her for a moment, but my two companions almost instantly, by way of apology, made the common salute of the country by taking off their hats. Where would one of the lower or higher classes in Europe have shown such feeling politeness to a poor and miserable object of a degraded race?"

These citations refute Mrs. De Saulles's statement that "We don't have them in my country," meaning negroes, and also show that in Chile, as in the United States and Europe, there are many people of culture and good breeding.

JOHN E. BRUCE,
President Negro Society for Historical Research.

New York, Dec. 3, 1917.

Christmas in Prison-Shadowed Homes

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: May I again this year bring to the hearts of your readers the plea for help and sympathy from the prison-shadowed homes where we shall try to bring a little joy and comfort this Christmas season? My work in the big state prisons all over this country has brought me in touch not only with tens of thousands of men incarcerated there, but also with their families, to whom they send me in the hours of sickness, poverty or despair that fall so cruelly to their lot. The man in prison has at least clothing, food and shelter while he serves his term, but the wife and little ones at home have often to face cold and hunger and are the innocent victims of an undeserved fate.

For years we have tried to gladden their Christmas. We don't call them together to join in one big dinner. That, of course, would be impossible and would not be a lasting help. Our method is to pack big Christmas boxes of groceries, new clothing and toys. As each family's need is investigated we are able to provide just what they need most.

There still rings in my ears the woful little voice of one of the small children we visited before Christmas. She was only a tiny child, but she was looking after four tinier ones in their two-roomed home while mother was out at work. "No, there won't be no Christmas this year; papa's away and Santa Claus is dead." Will some of the readers of this message help me to resurrect Santa Claus for the hundreds of little ones we long to help?

I know this year the work will be harder than ever because so much financial help is going to answer the great need in war-stricken countries overseas. We cannot be selfish or regret for a moment the generous help to other lands, but oh, can we not also remember practically these helpless ones at home?

So that the business methods of our organization may be thoroughly understood, let me add that the Volunteers of America is an incorporated society, that our books are carefully audited and that our treasurer will send a receipt for every dollar received and will hold vouchers for every dollar expended. Gifts of toys, clothing or money will be most acceptable. They should be directed to Mrs. Ballington Booth, Volunteer Prison League, 34 West Twenty-eighth Street, New York City. We shall indeed be grateful if the readers of this message can help us.

MAUD B. BOOTH.

New York, Dec. 1, 1917.

Crippling the Farms

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: I saw an article in your paper stating that a gentleman of the fuel committee has suggested closing the schools for two months during the winter. This time was to be made up by continuing the schools through the summer.

The Food Conservation Board has asked boys to work on farms at vacation time. I happen to have been on a farm July and August of this year and know how hard it is to get help from any source.

Thousands of boys went to the country last year because of the request made by the food committee. Many of them have been engaged for next year.

If the schools are to be continued in the summer it will bring about hard times to the farmers, who are depending on the boys for help.

A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT.

New York, Dec. 3, 1917.